

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



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For Immediate Release

Bomb Blast Seriously Injures Three Adults

On May 25, 2006, two Washington State men each had a hand blown off while handling an Illegal Explosive Device (IED); while a third man suffered serious head injuries.

“Unfortunately many people inaccurately refer to an IED as a “large firework.” There are a number of significant differences between Consumer Fireworks and IEDs that the public needs to be aware of,” stated Chief John Batiste.

They include:

- 1) An IED can have 100 times the destructive power of a consumer firework, equal to a ¼ stick of dynamite.
- 2) While possession or discharge of illegal consumer fireworks is a misdemeanor, possession or discharge of an IED is a felony.
- 3) Consumer fireworks are manufactured within industry standards, primarily for people to celebrate. IEDs are manufactured for the purpose of destruction, unfortunately, often times people injury or maim themselves with their use.
- 4) The most common IEDs, M-80s, at one time were commercially manufactured to be used as artillery simulators. All IEDs are now made in clandestine labs.
- 5) Anyone finding a cardboard tube or a tennis ball with a fuse attached must not handle it. Most IED's use flash powder, a very sensitive explosive that can detonate simply from the pressure being applied when picking it up.
- 6) If an IED is found, you must isolate the device, and evacuate the immediate area. Above all do not handle it. Contact a Bomb Squad as these devices are extremely dangerous and unstable.

The Washington State Patrol – Office of the State Fire Marshal wants to stress the importance of safety as the Fourth of July, and Fireworks season approaches, and highlight the significant differences between fireworks and illegal explosive devices.

For additional fire safety tips visit the Washington State Patrol – Office of the State Fire Marshal web page at <http://www.wsp.wa.gov/firemars.htm> or contact your local fire department.

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The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State including inspections of state licensed facilities, plan review of school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State's firefighters, and collecting emergency response data.